

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ALMATY 001012

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/CACEN (JMUDGE), EUR/RPM

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [KZ](#) [POLITICAL](#)

SUBJECT: [AMBASSADOR HOSTS NATO PARLIAMENTARIANS](#)

1. SBU Summary: On March 9, the Ambassador hosted two meetings for visiting NATO parliamentarians from the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security. The NATO Secretary General's Special Representative (SGSR) for Central Asia, Ambassador Robert Simmons, participated in the first meeting. (Details of the SGSR's meeting with NATO Ambassadors will be reported septel.) During the first meeting, parliamentarians had the chance to hear the Ambassador's general overview and ask specific questions regarding political, economic, and social issues in Kazakhstan. The Ambassador discussed Kazakhstan's successes, areas for improvement, and made recommendations on issues for parliamentarians to discuss in follow-on meetings with high-level GoK interlocutors. The DATT also discussed the state of play of Kazakhstan's military and the Ministry of Defense (MoD). Later in the evening, the Ambassador hosted a reception which allowed parliamentarians the chance to meet NATO member state Ambassadors on an informal basis. End of summary.

Kazakhstan's Economic Development

2. (SBU) The Ambassador began the morning meeting by outlining Kazakhstan's positive accomplishments in the recent past, citing specifics related to economic growth and religious/ethnic tolerance. Kazakhstan's strong economic growth and macroeconomic policy, positive investment opportunities, and stable currency should be considered a model for post-Soviet states to emulate. The Ambassador listed the GoK's three main budgetary priorities over the next two years as health reform, education and social programs - all areas currently handicapped by corruption. The GoK has also made efforts to update management of the National Oil Fund.

Kazakhstan's Political Development

3. (SBU) The Ambassador discussed Kazakhstan's positive outlook towards religious and ethnic tolerance. Although ethnic Russians are underrepresented in upper echelons of the GoK, in general, and Parliament, in specific, the country appears to transcend true ethnic divides. In regard to religious extremism, the GoK has taken Hizb-ut Tahrir's activities and violent actions by terrorist groups more seriously since the July 30, 2004, bombings in Tashkent. The Ambassador noted that the newly adopted extremism law had prompted concerns in the international community due to the lack of a concrete definition of extremism and the potential for use against minority groups.

4. (SBU) The Ambassador cited human rights, civil society, and governance as areas where progress had been weaker. Although Kazakhstan is a leader among Central Asian states, this country could be more proactive in reforming these sectors. The U.S. had been disappointed that the September 2004 elections to the lower house of parliament (Mazhilis) did not meet international standards. We would be watching upcoming presidential elections closely, as that would be the GoK's next opportunity to "do it right." The Ambassador discussed the dissolution of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK) party and the recent Procuracy inspections of U.S.-funded NGOs and other international organizations here.

Development of the Military

5. (SBU) The DATT then described Kazakhstan's military capabilities as "good and improving, although not fully NATO interoperable." The MoD has announced its plans to spend National Funds for 100-percent participation in 160 PFP events in 2005. The MoD registered for 130 in 2004, of which it participated in 110. The Kazakhstani military has proved it can operate in Iraq; its team has destroyed over 3 million pieces of ordnance since OIF began. It is paying attention to lessons learned. On a tactical level, Kazakhstan intends to partner with NATO to develop an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Center based on its experience in Iraq.

16. (SBU) The MoD is making strides to improve interoperability by creating a Defense Language Institute in which English will be one of the eight languages taught. Regarding civilian

control of the military, the DATT commented that currently MoD rarely makes a decision without consulting the MFA. Overall, the U.S. is reasonably optimistic about Kazakhstan's ability to meet its interoperability goals as long as it continues its positive record of planning ahead and fulfilling its promises.

MPs Ask about Non-Pro, the Environment, Energy

17. (SBU) The Ambassador and the DATT responded to questions from the parliamentarians regarding nuclear capability, level of cooperation on arms control, and environmental concerns. The Ambassador noted that the GOK faces a huge challenge with regard to environmental remediation, most notably at the former Soviet era nuclear testing site in Semipalatinsk.

18. (SBU) The parliamentarians asked about recent news articles on the seizure by authorities of 37 kg of Uranium 238 on the border of Kazakhstan. The Ambassador explained that the material had been seized in Russia. The Ambassador then described in detail the state of play of the Caspian and delineation, Kazakhstan's position as one of the top 10 oil exporters, and the three major export pipelines to world markets (north to Russia, the BTC pipeline, and the CPC).

19. (SBU) The Ambassador noted that an additional pipeline to China was under construction, although it will not serve the world market. Most oil revenues go directly into the offshore National Fund currently and are reinvested into oil infrastructure projects. The parliamentarians asked numerous questions about environmental issues.

10 (U) Minimize for Dushanbe considered.

Ordway

NNNN